Commonwealth senior officials meeting

1131. SHRI K. M. KHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the "Commonwealth Senior Officials' meeting was held at Islamabad from 22nd to 24th, November, 1994;

(b) whether Senior Officials of India participated in the meeting;

(c) if so, the details thereof.

(d) whether resumption of Indo-Pak talks on bilateral relations also took place in the meeting; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The Commonwealth Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) is held biennially at the level of Cabinet Secretaries/ Foreign Secretaries. The Indian delegation to the Islamabad SOM was led by the Foreign Secretary and also comprised Joint Secretary (IPA) and Joint Secretary (EW) in the Ministry of External Affairs.

(d) and (e) We had conveyed in advance to Pakistan through the diplomatic channels that in the margins of the SOM, Foreign Secretary would be available for any discussions, formally or informally, on the bilateral issues. Pakistan however, has been raising conditions and pre-conditions for any talks.

To recover land occupied by Pakistan

1132. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large chunk of Indian territory is under illegal occupation of Pakistan, commonly referred to as 'POK';

(b) what steps Government of India have taken so far and propose to take to recover that territory from Pakistan in the light of facts that holding of negotiations under Simla Agreement to resolve the Kashmir issue have not borne any fruit; and

(c) what is Government's reaction to the press reports of 22nd November, 1994, about Pakistan's rejection of Indian Prime Minister's offer for holding talks to resolve bilateral matters and branding India as insincere in resolving the Kashmir issue and insistence of Indian High Commission officials in Islamabad that offer of talks between the two countries stands?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Under the Simla Agreement of July 1972, Government of India and Government of Pakistan are committed to resolve their differences by peaceful means through bilateral negotiations.

(c) We are disappointed that a positive response is not available so far from Pakistan to our repeated offers in the recent period to hold talks, formally or informally. Pakistan has also been raising various conditions and preconditions for any talks. We would, however, pursue our proposal of a constructive dialogue with Pakistan at every opportunity.

Extradition of LTTE Chief

1133. SHRI VIRENDRA KATARIA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have approached the Government of Sri Lanka for the extradition of the LTTE Chief V. Prabhakaran who was declared a proclaimed offender in Rajiv Gandhi assassination case; if so, when and what is the reaction of the Government of Sri Lanka in regard thereto; and

(b) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) and (b) All relevant aspects of approaching the